

Cooking Channel wants to make over Tahoe bar

By Kathryn Reed

Which Lake Tahoe bar needs a makeover? The Cooking Channel wants to know.

The casting crew is in search of a bar that needs better ambiance, food people want, and improved customer service.

“We really want local recommendations ... what you feel really needs help, and who is save-worthy,” explained Danya Berman, casting director for “Belly Up”. “Who does the community want to see helped?”

The bar can be anywhere in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

The pilot of “Belly Up” aired in late summer. The network then gave the go-ahead for six episodes to be produced. The plan is to make a U-shape of the country when it comes to picking locations. Other areas include Phoenix-Scottsdale, Charleston, S.C., and Albuquerque.

Eddie Russell is the host. He is a chef and consultant who usually charges big bucks for the advice he will be dispensing in what will amount to 30-minutes of television. But it will be worth thousands of dollars in information and improvements.

The actual time the crew will be in town will be a few days, filming for hours, which will include a grand reopening party the community will be invited to.

“We want to help people erase bad reviews, make more money and help owners with their vision. Even dive bars have a vision,” Berman told *Lake Tahoe News*.

It won't be as aggressive as a show like “Bar Rescue” in part

because the Cooking Channel's emphasis is on food. Berman said food and service would be key elements of the show.

Filming is expected to begin in March or April. When the show airs will be up to network executives.

"America loves the underdog story. We like to see people and businesses made over. People want a happy ending," Berman said. "It is feel good show. Will there be some drama? I suppose there will be."

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Notes:

- To nominate a bar, email gastromakeover@gmail.com by Dec. 25.
- Bars must be less than 4,000-square-feet, have a working kitchen, have at least four employees, of which one must be a cook.
- Interviews with bar owners will be done via Skype. Those will be submitted to network officials for them choose the bars that will be part of the show.